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Fall 9-1-1999

### LS 381.01: Women and Film

Lynn Purl

*University of Montana, Missoula*

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**Spring 1999**

**Lynn Purl**

**Liberal Studies 381, Women and Film**

**T 3:40-5:30, R 3:40-6:30**

**CP 109**

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**243-6359**

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**Office hours: T 2:30-3:30. W 6:00-7:00 pm, and by appointment**

**Course Description:** This course will serve as an introduction to feminist film theory and to conceptions of women as characters in, and spectators and makers of, films. We will take a look at notions of femininity and masculinity, as well as class, race, and sexuality, in the classical Hollywood cinema, the "women's picture," world cinemas, including Third-World cinema, and art engagé or activist cinema. Among our goals will be to discover some of the rationales behind gender-based criticism and to get an overview of the diverse critical practices of feminist film theory. A spirit of open-mindedness, hope, and playfulness will be encouraged.

**Required text:** *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism*, Diane Carson et al, eds.  
Selected readings on reserve at Mansfield Library

**Course requirements:** A journal, a turn at facilitating class discussion, and a term paper, as well as class attendance and participation.

**Journal:** The journal can take any format you choose and may be typed or handwritten. You should write approximately one page in response to the readings and viewings. I need to see that you are familiar with the material and that, even if you haven't yet mastered it, that you are engaging with it; beyond the one page you may also write about the ways in which issues raised in class intersect with your own life, current events, or anything else you find helpful. The journal is a good place to formulate questions you'd like to raise in class, to begin developing ideas for your paper, and to work through difficult or intriguing concepts.

**Discussion sessions:** Working in pairs you will each take a turn facilitating class discussion. This can take any form you like: asking discussion questions, giving a presentation and asking class members to respond, showing film clips in class, or whatever you feel will get a lively conversation going.

**Paper:**

There is no good way to study film without actually watching films, so **attendance** at all class sessions and film screenings is mandatory. I'll allow 3 skips, no questions asked. After that, you will need a legitimate excuse, or your grade will be affected. Watching movies is more enjoyable when it's a collective experience anyway. In addition to being here, you need to keep up with the reading (beats desperate cramming) and **participate** in class discussions.

**Grading:** The breakdown will be as follows:

Journal:	25%
Paper:	25%
Discussion facilitation:	20%
Participation:	20%
Attendance:	10%

At noon Wed., March 10, I will be giving a talk, "Try a Little Tenderness": Gender, Spectatorship, and the Erotic in *The Crying Game* at the **Women's Studies Brown Bag Lunch Series** (I'll let you know where.) You are encouraged to come if you can make it. Because of this, we will watch *The Crying Game* on Tuesday, March 9, instead of our usual Thursday night screening. Check with Women's Studies for information on other talks in the Brown Bag Series.

*Week 1:*

T 1/26 Introduction

R 1/28 *Laura* (1944, Otto Preminger, USA, 85 min.). Paragraph due: What is feminism?

*Week 2:*

T 2/2 Read the Introduction, *MVFFC*, and Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (reserve packet); journals due.

R 2/4 *Vertigo* (1958, Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 128 min)

*Week 3:*

T 2/9 Read Tania Modleski, "Hitchcock, Feminism, and the Patriarchal Unconscious" and "Femininity by Design: *Vertigo*" (reserve); journals due.

R 2/11 *Now, Voyager* (1942, Irving Rapper, USA, 117 min.)

*Week 4:*

T 2/16 Read Judith Mayne, "Feminist Film Theory and Criticism" ( pp 48-64, *MVFFC*) and Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator" (reserve); journals due.

R 2/18 *Imitation of Life* (1959, Douglas Sirk, USA, 124 min.)

*Week 5:*

T 2/23 Read "Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and Female-oriented Melodramas of the 1950s" (pp. 93-108, *MVFFC*) and Frances Stubbs and Elizabeth Hadley Freydburg, "Black Women in American Films: A Thematic Approach" (pp. 481-491, *MVFFC*); journals due.

R 2/25 Read Thomas Elsaesser, "Leni Riefenstahl: the body beautiful, art cinema and fascist aesthetics" (reserve); view first part of *Olympia* (1936, Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 220 min)

*Week 6:*

T 3/2 Read Teresa de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender" (reserve); journals due.

R 3/4 *Paris Is Burning* (1990, Jennie Livingston, USA, 78 min.)

*Week 7:*

T 3/9 *The Crying Game* (1992, Neil Jordan, UK, 112 min.)

R 3/11 Read excerpts from Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (reserve)

*Week 8:*

3/15-19 Spring Break. Enjoy!

*Week 9:*

T 3/23 Journals due.

R 3/25 *Ladybird, Ladybird* (1993, Ken Loach, UK, 102 min.)

*Week 10:*

T 3/30 Read Christine Gledhill, "Image and Voice: Approaches to Marxist-Feminist Criticism" (pp. 109-123, *MVFFC*); journals due.

R 4/1 *Heartland* (1979, Richard Pearce, USA, 96 min.)

*Week 11:*

T 4/6 Journals due.

R 4/8 *Salt of the Earth* (1953, Herbert Biberman, USA, 94 min.)

*Week 12:*

T 4/13 Read Linda Dittmar, "The Articulating Self: Difference as Resistance in *Black Girl*, *Ramparts of Clay*, and *Salt of the Earth*"; journals due

R 4/15 *Charulata (The Lonely Wife)* (1964, Satyajit Ray, India, 117 min.)

*Week 13:*

T 4/20 Read Andrew Robinson, "*Charulata (The Lonely Wife)*" (reserve); journals due.

R 4/22 *Fire* (1996, Deepa Mehta, Canada) (set in India)

*Week 14:*

T 4/27 Read news clippings on *Fire* (reserve)

R 4/29 *Broken English* (1996, Gregor Nicholas, New Zealand, 92 min.)

*Week 15:*

T 5/4 Reading TBA depending on whether we do *Sambizanga* or *Raise the Red Lantern*; journal due

R 5/6 *Sambizanga* (1972, Sarah Maldoror, Angola, 102 min.) or *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991, Zhang Yimou, China-Taiwan-Hong Kong, 125 min.)